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**Ethics-Rorty-Cultural Studies:  
Towards an Understanding of  
the Cultural Production of Solidarity**

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## **Abstract**

Is cultural studies on the verge of an ethical turn? What role could the work of Richard Rorty play in such an ethical turn? Rorty may be considered as a cultural theorist whose work enables a productive articulation of cultural studies and that area of experience known as “ethics” – one’s sensitivity and sense of responsibility to others in pain. Through an extended “misreading” of the dispersed texts Rorty has written on and around the topic, it is possible to formulate a Rortian account of ethics as solidarity, including such concepts as the moral subject, the other, moral identification, moral community, as well as the ethical implications of Rorty’s theoretical ethnocentrism. This account, by virtue of its antifoundationalist and discursive theoretical position, holds much interest for a cultural studies concerned to understand the normative dimension of discursive meaning.

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## Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are for the texts of Richard Rorty used in this thesis.

Bibliographical information is provided in Works Cited and Consulted.

BK	The Barber of Kasbeam: Nabokov on Cruelty
BPPJ	The Banality of Pragmatism and the Poetry of Justice
CL	The Contingency of Language
CLC	The Contingency of a Liberal Community
CS	The Contingency of Selfhood
CTP	Comments on Taylor's "Paralectics"
CWE	Cosmopolitanism Without Emancipation: A Response to Jean François Lyotard
D	Diary
DMACL	De Man and the American Cultural Left
EL	The End of Leninism, Havel, and Social Hope
FID	Feminism, Ideology, and Deconstruction: A Pragmatist View
FMR	Freud and Moral Reflection
FP	Feminism and Pragmatism
HDFP	Habermas, Derrida, and the Functions of Philosophy
HKD	Heidegger, Kundera, and Dickens
HLP	Habermas and Lyotard on Postmodernity
HRRS	Human Rights, Rationality, and Sentimentality
Ia	Introduction [to <i>Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity</i> ]
Ib	Introduction [to <i>Truth and Progress</i> ]
IAEL	Introduction: Antirepresentationalism, Ethnocentrism, and Liberalism
IDTP	Is Derrida a Transcendental Philosopher?
INSNK	Is Natural Science a Natural Kind?
IPP	Introduction: Pragmatism and Philosophy

IPPNP	Introduction: Pragmatism and Post-Nietzschean Philosophy
IR	Inquiry as Recontextualization: An Anti-Dualist Account of Inquiry
JOMS	Just One More Species Doing its Best
LIE	The Last Intellectual in Europe: Orwell on Cruelty
MIPA	Moral Identity and Private Autonomy: The Case of Foucault
MOTCS	Moral Obligation, Truth, and Common Sense
MSSSH	Method, Social Science, and Social Hope
NR	The Notion of Rationality
NRP	Non-Reductive Physicalism
OE	On Ethnocentrism: A Reply to Clifford Geertz
P	Posties
PBL	Postmodernist Bourgeois Liberalism
PDCW	Philosophy and the Dilemmas of the Contemporary World
PDP	The Priority of Democracy to Philosophy
PILH	Private Irony and Liberal Hope
PMN	<i>Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature</i>
PRI	Pragmatism, Relativism, and Irrationalism
PSMP	Philosophy as Science, as Metaphor, and as Politics
RCD	Rationality and Cultural Difference
RCPD	Response to Comments on Philosophy and the Dilemmas of the Contemporary World
RCRR	Response to Comments on Richard Rorty, "Relativism: Finding and Making"
RDP	Remarks on Deconstruction and Pragmatism
RF	Response by Richard Rorty [to Farrell]
RSC	Response to Simon Critchley
S	Solidarity
SO	Solidarity or Objectivity
SS	Science as Solidarity
TL	Texts and Lumps
TLU	Towards a Liberal Utopia

TML	Two Meanings of “Logocentrism”: A Reply to Norris
TT	Thugs and Theorists: A Reply to Richard Bernstein
TWO	Trotsky and the Wild Orchids
UCRNF	Unger, Castoriadis, and the Romance of a National Future
WAW	Who Are We? Moral Universalism and Economic Triage



## Introduction

### I. Cultural Studies and Ethics

If there is one thing that people working within cultural studies agree on, it is that there is no universally agreed definition of cultural studies. In almost all accounts cultural studies appears as an amorphous array of ideas, practices, methodologies, theories, techniques, texts, institutions, values, politics and motives, rather than as a conventionally defined academic discipline. As Tony Bennett writes, cultural studies “comprises less a specific theoretical or political tradition or discipline than a gravitational field in which a number of intellectual traditions have found a provisional *rendez-vous*”: it is “an area of debate in which, certain things being taken for granted, the dialogue can be more focussed” (319, n.1).<sup>1</sup>

This unruly amorphousness granted, I think most practitioners in the field would agree that, whatever else it is, cultural studies is *political*. Two things can be meant by this. First, the object of inquiry in cultural studies – culture – is construed politically, as inseparable from relations of power, rather than, say, morally or economically or aesthetically or spiritually. While this does not mean all analyses performed under the name of cultural studies will focus only or mainly on the political dimension of cultural discourses, it does mean all such cultural discourses are agreed to be political. Second, not only is the object of inquiry political, so are the motives behind the inquiry. Simon During notes, for instance, that from the beginning cultural studies has been “an engaged form of analysis”, one which “did not flinch from the fact that societies are structured unequally, that individuals are not all born with the same access to education, money, health-care, etc” (1-2). This is not to say that cultural studies possesses a single normative political programme, but it is just to say that its practitioners openly admit that what they are doing is inseparable from power relations. They are deliberate about

their nonchalance for putative academic “objectivity” and about their attempts to employ cultural studies in the service of their political aims.<sup>2</sup>

However, notwithstanding this highly developed political consciousness, cultural studies has not had much to say about ethics. Ethics and politics can be thought of as two distinct, yet compatible, ways of describing intersubjective relations. Foucault’s model of relations of power could be seen to characterize politics, while Levinas’s model of relations of responsibility could be seen to characterize ethics. Put simply, politics asks, “What relations of power will best implement my responsibilities?”, whereas ethics revolves around the question “For whom am I responsible?” Conceptually, considerations of responsibility are prior to considerations of power, although historically, it can often be the other way around. With ethics and politics thus configured, cultural studies can fairly be said not to have theorized the production of moral responsibilities. It has, indeed, been noticeably silent about ethics.<sup>3</sup>

Of course, ethical feelings are not absent. The ethical residue of responsibility is undoubtedly latent in the consciously political agendas of feminist, Marxist, postcolonialist and queer critics and theorists working within the field: their political aims conceptually presuppose a sense of moral responsibility to women, the working class, non-Europeans and gays. Otherwise, why work politically for these groups in the first place?<sup>4</sup> Moreover, as a contentious and contested non-discipline, cultural studies has for a long time been characterized by a genuine, if fractured, sense of professional solidarity.

These two points having been granted, however, solidarity has not been the object of explicit theoretical attention. This neglect is understandable. Cultural studies was, after all, partly constituted through the construction of theoretical vocabularies whose historicism and nominalism suspended all consideration of normality and rendered the non-discipline radically at odds with conventional moral theory and philosophy. The form of cultural studies emerging within English departments, especially, was often incidentally cut off from any talk of ethics by the way it deliberately positioned itself against pre-superstructuralist, liberal humanist kinds of literary criticism with their Leavisian proclivity to see literature as a moral force that can somehow “make you a better person” (Eagleton 1983, 207). Given that cultural

studies's theoretical positioning eschewed such notions as philosophically naïve, its neglect of ethics makes historical sense.

Things may be about to change, however – may already be beginning to change. For ethics is increasingly being distinguished from politics and addressed by theorists employing an antifoundationalist theoretical vocabulary similar to the one so vital to cultural studies, theorists working either within the non-discipline or at its edges in a range of contiguous disciplines in the social sciences and humanities. The work of Emmanuel Levinas (1969; 1981; 1989; 1996), for instance, is gaining a lot of attention. His unconventional understanding of “the ethical” as a fundamental openness to the Other as a “radical alterity” is currently being developed by theorists as diverse and prominent as Simon Critchley (1992; 1996; 1999), Christopher Norris (1994), Zygmunt Bauman (1989; 1993), Jacques Derrida (1978; 1991; 1999), Jean-François Lyotard (1989), John Llewelyn (1995; 1998) and Luce Irigaray (1991). The work of social theorist Jürgen Habermas is also apposite. Whereas Levinas construes ethics to be an animal-like, corporal, pre-linguistic affair, Habermas's “discourse ethics” (1990; 1992; 1993) locates it in what he deems to be the universal social processes of language. Literary critics such as J. Hillis Miller (1987; 1995) and Tobin Siebers (1988), too, are incorporating antifoundationalist ethics into their work, as are several American moral, social and political philosophers (May 1995; Caputo 1993; Sandel 1982; Baier 1991). Also, the work of feminist and postcolonialist theorists from a range of disciplines, from literature to political science, has increasingly begun to address the idea of ethics in a variety of ways consistent with theory (Spivak 1996; Chow 1993; Chow 1995; Dean 1996; Fraser 1986; Fraser 1990; Shildrick 1997; Benhabib 1992). The moral and political concerns underlying Michel Foucault's extensive work have recently been emphasized by the posthumous publication of *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth* (1997) and by Christopher Falzon's study of the ethical dimension of Foucault's work (1998). In addition, the publication of two anthologies of essays (Merrill 1988; Squires 1993) considering the possibility and nature of ethics in the age of postmodernism draws contributions from a wide range of figures, such as Kate Soper, Paul Hirst and Chantal Mouffe. Finally, the neo-pragmatist thinker Richard Rorty, whose work is the object of this study, has addressed ethics in terms consistent with the antifoundationalism of cultural studies. Although most people tend to associate Rorty with the themes of

pragmatic antifoundationalism, liberal aestheticism and reformist politics, his work on ethics, usually discussed under the term “solidarity”, can in fact be traced as far back as 1979 to a few comments in Part Two of *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (182-92). Since then a barrage of texts have produced a powerfully suggestive, if diffuse, picture of the nature of ethics as solidarity as well as a dedicated commitment to the particular form of ethics found in his version of “liberalism”.<sup>5</sup>

Not all of these theorists would think of themselves as making contributions to cultural studies, let alone working *within* cultural studies. I do not believe we can validly claim that their work makes up a well-established, self-conscious debate about solidarity in cultural studies. My claim is that the emerging work of these solidarity theorists, by virtue of its antifoundationalist theoretical positioning, marks the opportunity of a *rapprochement* between that cultural studies and that area of experience and inquiry designated by the term “ethics”. Cultural studies has the chance to incorporate ethics into its vocabulary both as an object of theory or analysis and as an issue of normative debate. The work of the above ethical theorists can be taken as the first sign that ethics is now in the process of attaining this status. The broad aim of my study is to facilitate this process, with particular regard to the way of theorizing ethics as solidarity that is found in the texts of Richard Rorty.

## II. Richard Rorty and Ethics as Solidarity

As befits someone who praises the virtues of conversation, Rorty must be one of the most discussed academic figures of the late twentieth century. This lavish treatment, however, has not been bestowed on his work on solidarity. Out of 27 contributions to collections of essays on his work, only three (Burrows; Fraser 1990; Guignon and Hiley) could be said to address solidarity, and even then to a limited degree. The only book to attempt an examination of Rorty’s complete oeuvre, David L. Hall’s *Richard Rorty: Poet and Prophet of the New Pragmatism* (1994), though it purports to “wander here and there in Rorty’s rather broadly conceived corpus” (7), hardly touches on ethics. What *has* been written on Rorty’s solidarity work could accurately be described as wide but shallow. It is wide because from the beginning it has been multi-disciplinary, with contributions coming from philosophers, literary-

cultural critics, anthropologists, political scientists, jurists, theologians and historians. It is also wide because anyone who writes on any aspect of Rorty's work usually ends up including some comments somewhere on his notion of solidarity. This is especially true in discussions which take Rorty's "politics" as their ostensible subject; although some writers may never mention the words "solidarity" or "ethics", talking instead of Rorty's "political" position, their chief concern can be ethics.

Unfortunately, the considerable multi-disciplinary breadth of the discussion about Rorty's solidarity work is not currently matched by any comparable analytical depth. While there is a surfeit of work which offers superficial observations, there is a dearth of commentary that actually engages with Rorty's work through patient and detailed readings of his texts. Only three recent discussions of Rorty's solidarity work mount sustained book-length analyses: *Solidarity in the Conversation of Humankind: The Ungroundable Liberalism of Richard Rorty* (1995) by Norman Geras, Professor of Government at the University of Manchester; *Solidarity and the Stranger: Themes in the Social Philosophy of Richard Rorty* (1997) by Christian theologian Ronald Alexander Kuipers; and *The Work of Friendship: Rorty, His Critics, and the Project of Solidarity* (1999) by philosopher Dianne Rothleder.<sup>6</sup>

I would like to make five comments on the overall shape of the discussion of Rorty's solidarity work in order to contextualize my own contribution. First, there is little productive cross-pollination of ideas between the different commentators, with the majority showing a limited awareness of the other work on Rorty's ethics. Second, most of the commentary is critical insofar as it seeks only to point out alleged mistakes and dangers of Rorty's views rather than doing this *and* suggesting constructive developments or revisions. Third, many critics, even the most sophisticated ones such as Geras, Kuipers, Lentricchia, and Bernstein, are often mistaken in their understanding of important elements of in Rorty's ethical position. Geertz's essay (1986), for instance, contributed to the widespread myth that Rorty's work is necessarily ethnocentric in a pernicious way, while Fraser's celebrated essay (1990), perhaps the single most influential piece of commentary on Rorty's ethico-political work, has directed the attention of many commentators towards the putative tension between Rorty's pragmatism and romanticism.



Third, it is significant that Rorty's work on aestheticism and politics is often thrown into the analytical pot in discussions of his work on solidarity. In some cases (Bhaskar) preoccupation with criticizing Rorty's aestheticism or social democratic politics precludes serious engagement with what he has written on solidarity. In other cases (Fraser, Kuipers, Rothleder), aestheticism and politics are used as a means of undermining the theoretical validity of his account of solidarity. This seems to evince the mistaken assumption that if you accept what Rorty says about solidarity you must also accept what he says about aestheticism and politics. I would argue that some form of antifoundationalism, such as that outlined in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, is indeed a vital part of Rorty's work on ethics. However, this is not the case when it comes to his work on aestheticism, nor that on politics. In relation to his ethics, Rorty's politics and aestheticism are optional extras: we are not bound to consider his ethics with either his unique solution for the cohabitation of the public (ethical) and the private (aesthetic) spheres, the guiding issue of *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (1989), nor his praise of social democracy as the best form of political organisation, a major concern of *Achieving our Country* (1998).<sup>7</sup> Therefore, my study of Rortian ethics retains his antifoundationalism, but treats his views on politics and aesthetics as irrelevant to the present analysis.

Fifth, if the concerns of the discussion about Rorty's solidarity work can be divided into two broad strands – the *theoretical*, which focuses on “logical” problems with Rorty's account of solidarity (inconsistencies, incoherencies, tensions, contradictions, paradoxes, oversimplifications, exaggerations and inappropriate emphases), and the *normative*, which addresses the putative destructive effects of Rorty's account on the particular form of solidarity the given commentator supports (such as socialism, egalitarianism, liberalism, feminism) – then the vast majority of critical attention (with the exception of Geras's first two chapters) is concentrated in the normative strand, rather than the theoretical strand. Critics have been more concerned to highlight the supposedly useless or even dangerous effects of Rorty's work on this or that particular sense of solidarity than they have to consider its possible strengths as a theoretical account of solidarity in general, regardless of any supposed effects. This seems to me to be wrong-headed: how can we judge the normative effects of something before taking the time to understand it fully on a theoretical level? Partly as a

corrective to this tendency, my study deals almost exclusively with the theoretical aspect of Rorty's solidarity work.<sup>8</sup>

### III. Argument and Methodology

It should be clear by now that this is not a philosophical study of Rorty's work on solidarity. Although I hope his philosophical critics may be forced to think again through my treatment of his work, such a hope is incidental to my primary aims. Rorty is very much at the centre of my study in terms of explicit content – although even then, he is cast as a cultural theorist – but he is at the margins in terms of conscious objectives. My intention is not to contribute to the philosophical debate about Rorty by defending him from his detractors, but to examine the potential I see in his work to add a significant new perspective to cultural studies. My thesis is (1) that Rorty's scattered texts can be read as a theoretical account of solidarity, and (2) that this account, viewed as a contribution to cultural theory, opens up productive possibilities for cultural studies. Thus, my title places "Rorty" between "Ethics" and "Cultural Studies" and hyphenates all three terms in order to suggest that Rorty is a conductor or link between the two.

Most of the thesis is concerned with examining Rorty's dispersed texts on solidarity in an attempt to systematize them into a theoretical account of the topic, one which can provide temporary answers to the following questions: What is solidarity? How can it be produced? How can it be prevented? How can it be modified? – all in terms consistent with an antifoundationalist theoretical vocabulary. Then in a final chapter I examine the terms of a possible *rapprochement* between ethics and cultural studies which the Rortian account of solidarity allows. My claim here is that the Rortian account can be viewed as making a contribution to cultural theory, one which may open up various productive possibilities for cultural studies, such as cleaving open the logical space needed to allow various forms of analysis of ethics within a cultural studies perspective. Through this articulation of Rortian solidarity with cultural studies, the Rortian account takes on a different shape, a suggestive potentiality which can in turn re-shape cultural studies, imbue it with a new potentiality vis-à-vis ethics.

It is crucial to realise that neither a systematic account of solidarity nor the utility of such an account to cultural studies are to be simply “found” in Rorty’s work. Rorty’s strategy in approaching the topic (or indeed any topic) has been to avoid any attempt to be systematic in favour of multiple essays, descriptions, re-descriptions, re-re-descriptions, not in the hope that he will eventually get things right, but in the hope that describing solidarity in different ways may persuade as many different people as possible. Such an approach yields creative and inconsistent results on the levels of signifiers and signifieds. He has, moreover, never offered his work on ethics as a contribution to cultural theory and would, I suspect, be aghast at the suggestion that what he has written could be of use for cultural studies. What Rorty writes of Donald Davidson applies equally as well to himself: “Since [his] work has been almost entirely in the form of essays, and since he eschews large programmatic statements, it falls to his admirers to attempt a synoptic view of his work” (NRP 113). Rorty’s lack of interest in both explanatory (as opposed to persuasive) systematicity and cultural studies means my task has precisely been to “make” from out of his texts not only a systematic Rortian account of solidarity, but also an argument as to its utility for cultural studies.

In order to achieve this I have adopted as an interpretative methodology creative *misreadings* of his texts. The concept of misreading is associated with the work of Harold Bloom on poetic originality, and Rorty himself, following Bloom, argues that originality often proceeds by recontextualizing previous descriptions, rearranging them in new ways, placing them in untried relations to other descriptions. If this experimental strategy usefully highlights previously hidden features, similarities, differences, syntheses, antitheses, analogies and sequences, it can be said to have creatively misread the old descriptions and produced something original. Despite the fact my interpretive approach is more inferential than imaginative, this fairly describes my strategy in approaching Rorty’s texts.

Importantly, I am acutely aware that, thanks to “the ethics of reading”, as Miller puts it, my misreading of Rorty’s work represents just one possibility, and that therefore the misreading could be different, with other emphases, other ellipses, other sequences. I do not pretend to have woven his texts together into a seamless account, but recognise the cutting and suturing I have necessarily employed. Nevertheless, I do not think my



use of his work for a purpose he did not intend is unfair to him. Rorty himself would agree. In response to Frank Farrell's charge that he makes significant exegetical errors concerning the work of Donald Davidson, Rorty has written, "If you borrow somebody's good idea and use it for a different purpose, is it really necessary to clear this novel use with the originator of the idea? . . . My account can, I should like to think, stand on its own feet, and be judged on its own" (RF 190). While I make no pretensions that what follows is a systematic and detailed treatment of ethics, I am aiming for a systematized account of Rorty's treatment of ethics. All the while I seek to remain both consistent with his theoretical premises and faithful to the implicit spirit of his work. So, even though the following account of solidarity cannot be said to be *Rorty's*, it can, I hope, be said to be *Rortian*.

My methodology of misreading proceeds in two moves: a long internal one and then a short external one. The internal misreading will involve culling words and extracts from throughout Rorty's corpus and pasting them together in new combinations, juxtaposing textual fragments to construct untried configurations, weaving together texts written years apart to create a temporarily homogeneous text. It is "internal" in the sense that it stays largely inside Rorty's texts. In order to foreground my methodology, I refer to Rorty's texts individually through abbreviations (CLC, FMR, WAW, etc), rather than referring monolithically to his collections of essays (see the list of Abbreviations). Through this process I aim to accentuate certain of his ideas about solidarity while downplaying other, less successful, ideas. The intended result is a more systematic theoretical account of solidarity than is currently provided by Rorty's own work.

The external misreading will involve recontextualizing the Rortian account of solidarity by interpolating it within cultural studies. This will engender an ability to view Rortian ethics as a cultural theoretical model. It is "external" in the sense that I move outside Rorty's texts in order to consider their relation to the texts that make up cultural studies. Thus I complete the misreading of Rorty's texts by suggesting their utility for the analysis of solidarity as discourse. While I claim no definitive conclusions, I do suggest the fruitful benefits for cultural studies of the Rortian way of looking at ethics.

In outline: Chapter One looks at Rorty's Freudian picture of "the moral subject" as a mechanical web of self-description. Chapter Two elaborates what Rorty has written on "the other" to whose pain the moral subject is sensitive and towards whom he or she feels responsible. Chapter Three explores "moral identification" as the mechanism by which solidarity, as embodied in a "moral community", is produced. Chapter Four describes the broader "ethnocentric" conditions of solidarity, thus rounding off my misreading of the Rortian account of ethics as solidarity. Chapter Five concludes my thesis by turning to the implications of the account for cultural studies.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Simon During, for example, asserts that "cultural studies is not an academic discipline quite like others" (During 1), while Jonathan Culler asks wistfully "What is a professor of cultural studies supposed to know?" (in Nelson 273). The multiplicity of cultural studies has not stopped many from offering definitions. Of course, these definitions have usually been offered as manifesto-like attempts to achieve concrete political effects on the behaviour of others, rather than an attempt to capture cultural studies's essence. See Easthope, Eagleton (1983), Nelson, Johnson, Inglis and Bennett for interesting examples.

<sup>2</sup> For comments and qualifications on the political nature of cultural studies, see Bennett (307), Eagleton (1983, 210), Johnson (79), Nelson (278), Frow and Morris (354), Thwaites et al. (155-71) and Baldwin (17).

<sup>3</sup> I want to distance my empirical observation from Keith Tester's normative and evaluative view that cultural studies is a "morally cretinous" discipline (3) in which "meaningful questions about cultural and moral value have been at best ignored and at worst pushed quite beyond the asking" (6).

<sup>4</sup> Tobin Siebers's (1988) claim that all forms of literary criticism and theory are premised on an ethics, however latent, would not only overlap with the literary end of cultural studies, but could probably be argued in direct regards of cultural studies. As

James W. Carey writes, “cultural studies consists of a thinly disguised moral and political vocabulary” (67).

<sup>5</sup> Rorty’s most significant work on ethics can be found in the following texts (ordered by date of original publication): the essays “Method, Social Science, and Social Hope” (1980), “Postmodernist Bourgeois Liberalism” (1983), “Freud and Moral Reflection”, “Habermas and Lyotard on Postmodernity” and “The Priority of Democracy to Philosophy” (all 1984), “Cosmopolitanism without Emancipation: A Reply to Jean-François Lyotard”, “On Ethnocentrism: A Reply to Clifford Geertz” and “Solidarity or Objectivity” (all 1985), “Science as Solidarity” and “Thugs and Theorists: A Reply to Richard Bernstein” (both 1987), “Moral Identity and Private Autonomy: The Case of Foucault” and “Unger, Castoriadis, and the Romance of a National Future” (both 1988); much of the book *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (1989), particularly the chapters “The Contingency of Selfhood”, “The Contingency of a Liberal Community”, “Private Irony and Liberal Hope” and “Solidarity”; the essays “Feminism and Pragmatism”, “Rationality and Cultural Difference” and “The End of Leninism, Havel, and Social Hope” (all 1991); the autobiographical essay “Trotsky and the Wild Orchids” (1992); “Feminism, Ideology, and Deconstruction: A Pragmatist View” and “Human Rights, Rationality, and Sentimentality” (both 1993); and “Who Are We? Moral Universalism and Economic Triage” (1996).

<sup>6</sup> The following is a selection of commentary on Rortian ethics. For an example of a critic who points out the alleged exegetical mistakes in Rorty’s work see Farrell (117-47). The smug and light-minded tone of Rorty’s writings is criticised by Williams (175), Stout (45, 54), and Critchley (1996, 24). Commentary on the antifoundationalism crucial to Rorty’s solidarity work is voiced, in progressive order of criticism, by Daly (175-89), Laclau (62), Baker (115), Veroli (121), Lentricchia (16-9), Haliburton (50-1), Critchley (1996, 25-6), Goodheart (231-5), Stout (256), Hollis (249), Guignon and Hiley (357), Bernstein (283) and Mounce (209, 228). Commentary on Rorty’s use of the public/private distinction is expressed by Hall (134-6), Herdt (84-91), Laclau (64-5), Fraser (1990, 303-16), Williams (170-5), McCarthy (366-7), Guignon and Hiley (358), Critchley (1996, 24-5), Haber (59-70), Bernstein (280), Haliburton (51 ff.), Goodheart (225-9) and Bhaskar (134-5). Rorty’s ethnocentrism is

addressed by Bernstein (247), Dean (7), Veroli (123), Norton (27-45) and Geertz (109-13). Rorty's antiessentialist model of the moral subject is the target of work by Farrell (117-47), Critchley (1996, 26), Geras (47-69), Bernstein (275-7), Hollis (244-56), and Guigon and Hiley (356). Rorty's claims as to the efficiency of the mass media in facilitating solidarity is incisively discussed by Tester (90-109).

<sup>7</sup> Rorty's moral position (liberalism) should be carefully separated from his political position. The latter is outlined most clearly in TT, although the essay is now over a decade old. See also the more recent EL where Rorty urges leftists to stop using "capitalism" and "socialism" as the central terms of political analysis and to focus instead on "the struggle against human misery" (EL 229). I believe that Rorty may be serving a useful purpose in his insistence that a politico-economic theory derived from the nineteenth century should not be employed uncritically. However, to repeat, my study of Rorty's ethics stands independently of his politics.

<sup>8</sup> I am of the view that all that need be said of any putative normative implications is that there are none. Rorty's theoretical redescription of how ethics works is consistent with *all* normative ethical visions and *all* political programmes. This has been explained lucidly by Rorty himself: JOMS 6, DMACL 132, S 189.